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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: LIEN CHAN'S CHINA TRIP

1. Summary: KMT Chairman Lien Chan's return from his trip to China and President Chen Shui-bian's comment on Lien's trip Tuesday were the spotlight of the Taipei dailies May 4. The front-page news story of the pro-unification "United Daily News" and the page-two news stories of the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan biggest daily, and the centrist "China Times" all reported on Chen's remarks in Kiribati that cross-Straits dialogue may come faster and earlier than expected. In the meantime, these newspapers also carried reports saying Chen denied that there is a "1992 consensus" across the Taiwan Strait. The "Liberty Times" reported on Chen's remarks on its front page from a different angle which headlined: "Bian strongly criticized Lien's comments that the KMT will cooperate with China to counter Taiwan independence." In addition, almost all the Chinese-language Taiwan dailies carried State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher's remarks Monday that the United States supports a dialogue across the Taiwan Strait and that Washington does not intend to try to manipulate or organize such a process.

2. Almost all the editorials of the major Taipei dailies sought to evaluate Lien Chan's China trip. Editorials of the pro-independence "Liberty Times," "Taiwan Daily" and the limited-circulation, pro-independence English-language "Taipei Times" defined Lien's trip as a journey of failure that will bring disaster for Taiwan. The centrist "China Times" editorial, however, said Lien's trip has unveiled the first page of a peace roadmap for both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The editorial of the limited-circulation, pro-unification English-language "China Post" also said Lien's ice-breaking trip will have far-reaching implications on Taiwan's domestic politics, its relations with the mainland and the role Washington plays in cross-strait ties. End summary.

A) "It Is Easy to Sell out [One's] Country but Very Difficult to Pursue Honor - Something That Defeated Politicians Should Ponder"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (5/4):

". [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's trip to China was by no means a journey of peace but absolutely a journey of failure, a journey that fawned over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and betrayed Taiwan. Lien's trip is not a historical trip that ends civil war animosity and starts the third round of cooperation between the KMT and CCP but a trip that seeks to join hands with Hu Jintao of the CCP in order to oppress and restrain Taiwan and Chen Shui-bian. . In short, Lien's China trip has exposed his narrow view, inflexibility, strong mindset of hatred, and his grand Chinese mentality of seeing himself as a 'genuine Chinese.' It is fortunate that Taiwan is a democratic country whose politicians need not to hide their mentality. It is even more fortunate that the voters in Taiwan made a correct judgment by not voting for Lien, or the island would face an unprecedented disaster now."

B) "Lien Chan Fails to Secure Peace But Has Brought Disasters to Taiwan's Democracy"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] commented in its editorial (5/4):

". Lien's China trip has made things very clear: under the grand Chinese nationalism, the KMT's grudges with the Chinese Communist Party are merely 'internal conflicts,' while the KMT's arguments with the DPP government under Taiwan's democracy are the real 'clashes between one country and its enemy.' This is the real historical disaster that Lien's China trip has brought to the democratic Taiwan."

C) "It's Time for Lien to Come Clean"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times"

[circulation: 30,000] said in an editorial (5/3):

". Lien's trip has succeeded in cementing a place, however small, in China's history. It has also generated reasonable suspicion that he is preparing to act treacherously against Taiwan. On his return, Lien should present [President] Chen with a report on his trip. He should also instruct the KMT legislative caucus to end its boycott of the arms-procurement budget. This will help repair the damage he has done to his image among Taiwanese people.

"Lien must show that domestic stability is on his agenda, otherwise he will have demonstrated that Taiwan's basic interests do not coincide with his own."

D) "What Changes Has Lien Chan's China Trip Brought [to Both Sides of the Taiwan Strait]?"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] commented in an editorial (5/4):

". First, it is certain that [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's China trip has successfully transformed the atmosphere across the Taiwan Strait. Take a look at the cross-Strait atmosphere about one and a half months ago when Beijing insisted on enacting the Anti-Secession Law or the atmosphere around half a year ago when Taiwan was immersed in the heated debates of whether to change its names or hold a referendum on a new constitution. At that time, the international community was gravely concerned that unpredictable conflicts might occur anytime across the Taiwan Strait, and the United States even strongly criticized Taiwan several times. Also at that time, there was no possibility for a dialogue across the Taiwan Strait, let alone talk about a peace treaty or confidence-building measures. But now [we] hear proposals regarding cross-Strait peace and exchanges. The change of the atmosphere started immediately when Lien set foot in mainland China!

"Lien's trip to China has also uncovered the current mainstream public view in Taiwan; namely, people here crave peace across the Taiwan Strait. Lien's China trip has won the majority of the Taiwan people's support despite the harsh criticism and attacks from the Green Camp. The approval rate of Lien's trip indicates that the 'status quo' yearned for by the Taiwan public now is not the status quo of 'hostility and confrontation' but the status quo of 'peace and interaction.' .

"Another point that is worth noting is that Lien's China trip has made it impossible for Beijing to avoid the 'Republic of China' any more. Even though it may still be too early for Beijing to treat the ROC positively, Beijing has at least started to accept indirectly that both sides of the Taiwan Strait are now divided. .

"Perhaps [we] will have to wait until [PFP Chairman] James Soong's trip to China, or even President Chen's future trip to China to see substantive breakthroughs in cross-Strait relations. But [we] believe that no one can deny that such a big historical transformation [with regard to the cross-Strait relations] was triggered by Lien. Lien's China trip has indeed unveiled the first page of a peace roadmap for both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and no one can take away his role in the history!"

E) "Lien's Triumphant PRC Visit May Have Wide Implications"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 300,000] observed in an editorial (5/4):

"Main opposition KMT chairman Lien Chan returned home triumphantly yesterday after having made history through a high-profile eight-day Chinese mainland trip that culminated in a summit meeting with China's new paramount leader Hu Jintao. The ice-breaking trip will have far-reaching implications for Taiwan's domestic politics, its relations with the mainland and the role Washington plays in cross-strait ties. .

"The growing China fever brought about by the Lien visit could eventually erode the role the U.S. has been traditionally playing in relations between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. Once the thaw is achieved in the political standoff across the strait, Taiwan would be able to directly deal with Beijing, reducing the need for Washington to play an intermediary role.

"If relations improve to the extent that leads to the

conclusion someday of a peace agreement between Taipei and Beijing, this island might no longer feel necessary to invest heavily in military equipment. Such a development could reduce Taiwan's dependence on the U.S. for the supply of weapons. ."

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